

Social Questions

BULLETIN

of the Methodist Federation for Social Service (unofficial), an organization which rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society; which seeks to replace it with social-economic planning in order to develop a society without class distinctions and privileges.

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Methodist Women in Action

Someone has said that "American Methodism is in the act of discovering John Wesley, not simply as an evangelist with a message of redemption, but as a social prophet with a vision of the Kingdom of God on earth." Wesley had a decided and practical philosophy that was concerned with human need in its relation to the distribution of wealth and opportunities for personality development, the promotion of a program of democratic education, the relief of human suffering, and the renunciation of war as a method toward world unity and understanding.

The Department of Christian Social Relations and Local Church Activities* has sought to undergird its program with such basic ideals as John Wesley, himself, discovered in the gospel of Jesus. The Department stimulates individuals and groups toward new attitudes and activities. "It shall seek to make real and effective the teachings of Jesus as applied to individual, class, racial, and national relationships," says its statement of purpose. "It shall endeavor to enlist the participation of church women in such questions as have a moral or religious significance or an important bearing on public welfare. . . ." (In November, 1941, about seventy-five members of the Department met for three days, translating the purpose into practical lines of action for 1942.)

Such a purpose makes it imperative that women become an active leaven in the church for disseminating information, building Christian attitudes, and fostering social action movements and enterprises. Such concern for human need must be in keeping with the challenge of the hour as it relates to our local, national, and world responsibility. We must minister to the spirit of our people, bringing hope and justice to discouraged minorities in our midst, building security for the economically oppressed, giving a sense of direction to confused leaders, and strengthening the faith of all in the ultimate triumph of righteousness in a troubled world.

Although the Department is not very old, already women from all sections of the country have begun the process of pooling their experiences and needs as a basis for a church-wide effort in the building of a Christian community near and far.

Already social action projects have been promoted widely by Methodist women in line with the Department's program. These projects are listed (in part) for the purpose of indicating what other Methodist women can do:

SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS

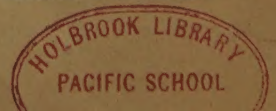
"Studied labor conditions in defense industries; studied Social Creed of the Church; interracial project resulted in better living conditions for Negroes; signatures secured for anti-lynching protest; completed cooperative conference study on juvenile delinquency; promoted work for assistance to camps for conscientious objectors; studied health needs of county and worked for increased appropriations with success; met with Neighborhood Councils to study local conditions and needs; studied local liquor control laws and worked for enforcement; many reported peace plays and special peace programs; worked for legislation; classes for mothers in child care; panel discussion for Race Relations Sunday; appointed committee to work with migrants; surveyed church program in Mill Districts; studied 'Toward a Just and Durable Peace'; worked with refugees; Christian family classes and church family surveys; attended citizenship school sponsored by Woman's Joint Legislative Council; had young adult fellowship forum on the Christian Family; cooperated with Temperance Alliance; delegates sent to Institute on International Relations at University of North Carolina; cooperative project in Raleigh seeking more desirable facilities at bus station; opposed opening of cocktail lounge in Y.W.C.A.; sent undernourished children to sunshine camps; made special studies of influx of defense workers, with special note of the needs of minorities; studied program for control of syphilis; spent several days at state legislature working for passage of educational appropriations for scholarship aid to Negroes—\$50,000 appropriated; secured Rosenwald library for Negro school; county survey of liquor traffic made resulting in many places being closed."

Such projects fall, in general, in seven classifications, and are in line with the Department plans initiated by seven Resource Committees whose program of social action can be described best through the following seven areas which suggest further projects:

LOCAL CHURCH AND COMMUNITY COOPERATION

Increased emphasis is being placed on community needs and opportunities for church women. Community surveys intelligently planned and promoted by church women are

* Department of Christian Social Relations and Local Church Activities of the Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 150 Fifth Ave., New York City. Executive Secretary—Miss Thelma Stevens.



resulting in a larger cooperation with community agencies. Projects that relate to emergency needs in defense areas, the strengthening of the bonds between church and family, providing fellowship features as a regular part of the church activities, the training of church women for more effective volunteer community service, interdenominational social action enterprises, and many other avenues for church and community cooperation are increasingly receiving the attention of Methodist women.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS

The basic issues of life in the church and community are rooted and grounded in the economic opportunities, assets, and needs of the people. Christians, recognizing this fundamental truth, must work to bring justice and a fair deal to every person in the whole community. The following areas are timely for church women in 1942:

1. Every woman is a consumer, part and parcel of one of the great economic forces in our democracy. The Secretary of the Department of Christian Social Relations and Local Church Activities, with her committee in each local church, should make available to the women of the Society such material and information as will promote wise buying; group buying experiments and consumers' co-operatives may be feasible in some places.

2. As citizens women should work to make government services operate for all the people, especially those whose aim is to increase the economic well-being of low income groups; *i.e.*, school lunch program, stamp plan, and similar projects. Every effort should be made to combat price inflation and increase the production of consumer goods.

3. Women should seek to preserve the economic rights of the worker, as stated in the Wage and Hour Fair Labor Practice Act; interest themselves in the extension of social and economic benefits to farm and domestic labor; work for the eradication of the liquor evil which diverts billions of dollars annually from the purchase of the necessities of life.

4. As managers of households women should seek the well-being of thousands of women domestic workers—their hours, wages, and working conditions are part and parcel of the social well-being of our democracy.

5. Women should commend the effort of Negro people and other minority groups to secure jobs and training for jobs on the basis of the interest and capacity of the individual, and work unceasingly for the employment of all people without reference to race, creed, or color.

6. Women should seek to make Christian principles and professional standards prevail in the employment of workers by church boards; fair labor standards must prevail in the employment of workers in church institutions and by local church boards of stewards.

MINORITY GROUPS AND INTERRACIAL COOPERATION

Believing that the most important consideration before our country today is national unity, and that the most important issue before the Christian church today is World Fellowship, major emphasis in this area should center around the following:

1. Church women in all groups must strive for an expression of American democracy and Christian fellow-

ship in the proceedings of the societies and in their educational and service activities.

2. In all areas of life women should seek to integrate minority groups into the larger life of the community, beginning with our own church institutions for minority groups.

3. Because of the increasing trend toward discrimination against members of minority groups, including discriminatory legislation, and widening distances between groups, church women are urged carefully to evaluate all attempts to divide people and to stand in their churches as influences for unity and good will.

4. Government services should operate impartially for all groups in the population. To secure the effectiveness and impartiality of these services, make a survey of the number, type, and impartial operation of such services as Agricultural Adjustment, N. Y. A., Agricultural Extension, Farm Security, health and public welfare services, schools and colleges, and employment practices in defense areas.

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP

1. Major emphasis in the area of Christian Citizenship for 1942 should be built around a program seeking full participation of all groups in primaries and elections, support of legislation to remove all barriers to the use of the franchise, such as the poll tax as a prerequisite for voting, and the white primary; the promotion of classes in citizenship for all new voters and a continuing program of education for all citizens.

2. There should be a positive approach to community recreation problems, and the constructive study of crime and its treatment.

3. Women are urged to support Federal and state legislation designed to restore freedom in the choice of films, and abolish compulsory block booking and blind selling of films.

4. Women are urged to give active support to Federal Aid for Public Education as found in S. 1313, which provides for equalization of educational opportunity for all the children of all the people.

ALCOHOL AND OTHER NARCOTICS

The suggestion for activity as outlined below should be considered as the beginning of a continuing program of education to be accompanied by related activities.

1. Methodist women, through the study of suggested reference material, demonstrations, and other visual aids, should learn what alcohol is and what it does. . . .

2. Let requests be made to public schools and universities that narcotic education be correlated effectively with biology, physiology and hygiene, and that State Departments of Education and Teachers' Colleges be requested to train teachers in facts and methods for teaching narcotic education in all the grades. Necessary steps for such a plan may be initiated by church women.

3. Recommendations dealing with narcotic advertising include protests to broadcasting stations and magazines bringing such advertisements into the home. . . .

4. Women are urged to support and commend those officers who enforce the law pertaining to liquor, and seek to elect to public office persons of unimpeachable integrity. Public interest must be aroused in the enforcement of the May Bill, restricting vice in the vicinity of military camps.

Active support of the Shepherd Bill, S. 860, should be increased.

CHRISTIAN FAMILY

Today all over the world family life is in a swift moving current of social, educational, economic and political change that has altered every area of life. In view of this obvious fact the following activities for 1942 are suggested:

1. The survey which was begun last year to determine major needs in the area of family life and its relation to the church through questionnaires available for use in the local society should be carried forward.

2. Women must continue to advocate and to work for special courses on Education for Family Life in the church, grade school, high school and college.

3. The local Committee should actively promote and foster programs of study on the economic aspect of family life, on consumer education, on problems of family health and on various phases of the home economic program.

4. Attention is called to the following recommendation of the Woman's Division:

"That inasmuch as a great emphasis is being placed on education toward securing and developing the stability of the home, We recommend that the Woman's Division of Christian Service recognize the fundamental importance of family planning and approve the cooperation of the Woman's Societies with public health departments and medical groups in furthering a program of planned parenthood."

5. Knowing the devastating effect upon family life of the spread of venereal infection, it is recommended that all possible support be given to the securing of medical and prophylactic treatment to prevent infection.

6. That support be given to legislation providing for pre-marital health examinations.

7. That parents be urged to strengthen the spiritual foundations of the home by keeping sensitive to opportunities for growth in worship emerging in the normal routine of family life and by providing adequate and stimulating literature including the rich heritage of the Bible; and by encouraging participation in Church Schools, Young People's organizations and Church Services. (The Commission on Evangelism of the Methodist Church provides valuable resource material in this field. Special attention is called to the use of the UPPER ROOM.)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND WORLD PEACE

In this crucial period of our nation's life, the church must keep its sense of direction and not be swayed by the war cry. Christian fellowship must be preserved within the church in the face of conflicting ideals. The church must also build with greater strength a world fellowship that transcends hatred and bitterness among nations, classes and races, looking with intelligent foresight toward the time when men will sit around a peace table and plan a new world. Machinery must be set in motion to create intelligent peace aims in the minds of leaders. The church is the only agency with an organization sufficiently strong and stable to bridge the gulfs between races and nations and classes. Such a bridge will not be built with guns and boats and war machinery, but with a steadfast faith, working toward a new world order where nations—great

and small, where races—yellow, black, brown, and white—will all share according to need. These tangible methods have been recommended to Methodist women for 1942:

1. A more intensive educational program in the field of International Relations and World Peace must be fostered in the local church. This means that women should assume a larger responsibility for promoting active peace committees in the church; special studies on the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace must be promoted; circulating libraries of materials in this area should provide information and stimulation. The Conference Woman's Society should work to have a representative on the Annual Conference Committee on World Peace.

2. Plans must be made for a better informed church constituency as it relates to increasing problems in defense areas and to our responsibility for supporting Civilian Public Service Camps for Conscientious Objectors, as a part of the church's total task in these crucial days.

3. Cooperation with the Commission on World Peace should be continued with new emphasis on attendance at Institutes on International Relations, and increased activity in promoting legislation looking toward a new Christian world order. Reconstruction should begin now!

THELMA STEVENS.

Dies Committee

On February 10th Charles C. Webber, together with representatives of civic and labor organizations, appeared before the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives in Washington, D. C., in opposition to the resolution (H.R. Res. 420) which calls for the extension of the Dies Committee's life to January 3, 1943, and asks for an appropriation of \$100,000.

Charles Webber testified that the United Christian Council for Democracy (the organization which unites our M.F.S.S. with similar groups in the other denominations) had gone on record as follows:

"We oppose the continuation of the Dies Committee which has proved itself unfit for the task assigned to it."

He read into the record such statements as the following, taken from the February 10, 1940, issue of "Information Service," published by the Federal Council of Churches, 297—4th Ave., N. Y. C.:

"Individuals and organizations who have been 'smeared' have either had no chance to defend themselves before the Committee or were heard so long after the original charges were published that the connection between the charges and the defense was probably missed by many readers.

"Public statements have been issued by the Committee condemning persons and organizations before they had been heard. In some cases these have been issued without being brought before the Committee as a whole."

He also put into the record a number of excerpts from the American Civil Liberties Union's (170 Fifth Ave., N. Y. C.) pamphlet "Help Stop the Dies Committee."

Among the excerpts were these:

"The reasons for our opposition are that the Committee's irresponsible activities and unfair methods are destructive of civil liberties. Its charges, often unfounded or unproved, and always exaggerated, arouse hysteria, intolerance and repression.

Dies Committee (cont.)

"The Committee has conceived un-American activities primarily in terms of the Communist movement. Comparatively little attention has been paid to Nazis and Fascists or to the native American organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Silver Shirts; and none at all to certain powerful personalities and movements in American life like Father Charles E. Coughlin and the Christian Front, known to be associated with Nazi and Fascist propaganda."

In summarizing, he quoted from Roger Baldwin's (Exec. Sec'y of the A. C. L. U.) letter of January 29, 1942:

"Not a single piece of legislation has resulted from the Dies Committee investigation. The net effect of its operations has been only to arouse prejudice and unjustified attacks on liberal and progressive causes. Nothing is gained for national defense and unity in a time of crisis by arousing the fears which the Dies Committee promotes. The established agencies of government are adequately equipped to protect the country against subversive influences."

On February 11 Representative Vito Marcantonio told the Rules Committee that Dies deceived the American people when he claimed that the State Department and the Department of Justice had asked him not to use information which, according to Dies, "could have prevented the tragedy at Pearl Harbor."

Marcantonio revealed that Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles had refuted Dies' statement and had authorized him to make a similar refutation on behalf of President Roosevelt to the effect that the White House did not ask Dies to refrain from making public any information he possessed concerning Japanese activities.

The evidence submitted by Charles Webber, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties (write to them at 1400 L St., N.W., Washington, D. C., for a free copy of their excellent pamphlet on "Pro-Axis Leanings of the Dies Committee Hinder U. S. War Effort"), the

National Lawyers Guild, New York City Chapter (write to them at 16 East 41st St., New York, N. Y., for their documented "Review and Analysis of the Dies Committee," price 20c), and Congressmen Vito Marcantonio and Thomas H. Eliot (grandson of the famous Harvard president) has made a real impression upon the members of the House and there is a possibility that Res. 420 will be defeated when it comes up for a vote.

Wire or write your Congressman immediately to oppose the Resolution for the reasons advanced above!

In case the House should adopt the Resolution before this BULLETIN reaches you, wire or write your Congressman to vote against any appropriation for the Dies Committee.

If Dies had information that "could have prevented the tragedy at Pearl Harbor," why did he keep silent? Is not keeping silent under such circumstances a traitorous act?

Protest now before it is too late. Wire your Congressman today!

Negroes Oppose Dies

Dr. William H. Jernagin, president of the Fraternal Council of Negro Churches of America, said:

"Since 1938, when the Dies Committee was first created, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and other organizations have persistently urged the Committee, through Mr. Dies, to investigate mob violence against Negro citizens, lynching and other un-American activities.

"To date, Mr. Dies and his Committee have refused not only to take action but to conduct even a partial investigation of these matters."

Anti-Lynching

Write Rep. H. W. Sumners, Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary, in support of H.R. 971, the anti-lynching bill introduced by Rep. Joseph Gavan of New York.

Under its provisions, the federal Department of Justice shall cause an investigation to be made whenever any state or government agency fails to protect victims of a lynching mob.

Dr. Ward's Itinerary

During February Harry F. Ward gave addresses before Methodist and other groups in California—Pomona, San Diego, Pasadena, Glendale, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Berkeley, San Francisco, and Portland, Oregon.

He is scheduled for March in Seattle and Tacoma, Wash.; Vancouver, B. C.; Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta; Regina and Saskatoon, Sask.; Brandon and Winnipeg, Man.; Minneapolis, Minn., and Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

35th Anniversary

If you have not already sent in your special contribution to our 35th Anniversary Fund, will you do so now?

Also send us a list of socially-minded ministers and laymen that you think ought to be receiving the SOCIAL QUESTIONS BULLETIN.

Plan to attend our National Conference at Cleveland, Ohio, May 26, 27, 28. Bishop Francis J. McConnell will preside and give one of the principal addresses.

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